

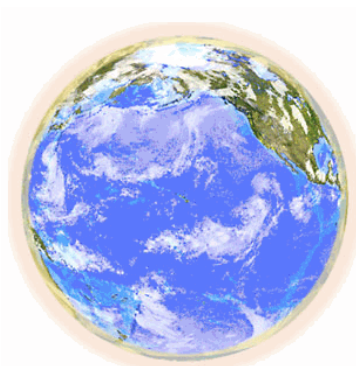


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Dear Constituent,

Today, April 22, we observe the 35th annual **Earth Day**, a day when people from all walks of life come together to highlight the need for a cleaner, healthier and safer world for themselves and their children.

We are united today by our commitment to keeping our water safe, our land clean, our air pure, and to increasing the numbers of wide open spaces where children can play and learn. I am proud to be doing my part in Congress to protect our environment and create a clean and healthy planet for our children and grandchildren. My voting record in Congress reflects my commitment and people who care about the environment have taken notice. I received a 100% rating in the 108th Congress from The League of Conservation Voters, a group devoted to protecting the environment. I also have received a lifetime achievement score of 93% by the Georgia Public Interest Research Group's, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to preserve the environment.



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I thought it would be fitting on Earth Day to tell you about some of the challenges we are facing and the steps I'm taking to help preserve our shared treasure – the richness and beauty of this little piece of real estate we call Earth.

### **Reaffirming Our Commitment to A Healthy Environment**

One challenge of our society, particularly in urban centers, is that we do not often have the opportunity to lose ourselves in nature. In our rush to progress technologically and to grow economically, we sometimes forget about the simple things that give us an inner sense of fulfillment and happiness. We have busy lives and conflicting priorities – raising our families, educating our children, and providing for our loved ones. We want good jobs and a healthy economy, and in our rush for these things, we may not realize that we are sacrificing our environment and our future in the process. Recently some public officials have suggested that protecting our environment stands in the way of economic progress, but this is not the case. We must be willing to move beyond ourselves and our own problems and consider the broader impact of our actions and the legacy we leave for our children. If we do ! not, we will lose a part of our humanity we cannot replace.

I believe that in the coming days and years, the cause of civil rights will become more and more

engaged in protecting green space and open land, in clearing the air, cleaning the water, and renewing the land of this nation. A clean environment is a fundamental right. It enables the pursuit of a healthy life-- physically, mentally, and psychologically. Only a well-protected, clean environment will provide us with the opportunities for our society to progress technologically and economically.

### **Fighting to Protect Our Future**

Thirty-five years after the first Earth Day, our air is cleaner, our drinking water is safer, our rivers no longer catch fire, and the bald eagle is no longer endangered. And yet these key bipartisan achievements of the 1970s are being taken for granted and rolled back by some in Washington, D.C. They are putting the profit-making interests of big industry ahead of our children's wellbeing and our country's future.

Some of the major childhood health issues facing us today are the result of a polluted environment. There has been an alarming increase in childhood asthma. Five million children have asthma, making it the most common chronic childhood illness in the United States. Mercury contamination is so widespread that 44 states have issued warnings about contamination of their lakes and rivers, as well as the fish we eat. Ten million American children under the age of 12 live within four miles of an Superfund toxic waste site. *(Superfund is the Federal government's program to clean up the nation's uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. Under the Superfund program, abandoned, accidentally spilled, or illegally dumped hazardous waste that pose a current or future threat to human health or the environment are cleaned up.)*

The Bush Administration is reversing decades of bipartisan progress on the environment – by working to roll back the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Just this week, Congress debated and voted on national energy legislation and priorities. I am sure you have been to the gas pump lately and have been shocked by the prices. Do you know that the energy legislation that I voted against this week does nothing to address these increasing gas prices? It does very little to encourage the development of alternative fuels, and it weakens the clean air and clean water protections. We can do better than this.

At home, I am working to reduce congestion on our highways and to make public transportation an attractive option for people who work and play in Metro Atlanta. To help in this effort, I have secured over \$16 million in federal transportation funding that was allocated to the 5th District in legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives this year. This funding will ease traffic congestion and provide infrastructure improvements on some of our most congested roads. It will support public transportation projects, including MARTA, and provide funding to advance the Atlanta Beltline/C-Loop public transit project. The C-Loop is a 22-mile beltway that would encircle Atlanta. It will provide easier access to many of Atlanta's cultural institutions and other area attractions allowing citizens to avoid downtown or major highways. As a by-product of this development over 1400 acres of new parks will be created.

I am committed to preserving and expanding our parks and green spaces in the Atlanta metro area. Please visit my web site for a copy of an editorial I wrote on this issue.

[http://www.house.gov/johnlewis/oe\\_parks\\_for\\_atlanta.html](http://www.house.gov/johnlewis/oe_parks_for_atlanta.html)

### **Protecting Our Environment in the 109th Congress.**

As the 109th Congress has gotten under way, I am working with my colleagues on legislation that will preserve and protect our environment. Below is a list of bills that I have co-sponsored and other

actions that I have taken to influence our environmental policy.

Climate Stewardship Act - H.R. 759 – Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and dependence upon foreign oil.

Clean Water Protection Act – A bill that will be introduced soon to protect waterways by prohibiting the dumping of mining fill into rivers and streams.

National Computer Recycling Act – H.R. 425 – Promotes the recycling of used computers and the development of a national infrastructure for the recycling of used computers.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Bill - H.R. 567 - Preserve the Arctic coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

National Park Centennial Act – H.R. 1124 – Promotes and protects the viability of the National Parks.

Clean Water Restoration Act - H.R. 1356 – Restores original intent of Congress regarding the scope of Federal authority and protections under the Clean Water act.

Save Our Waters From Sewage Act - H.R. 1126 - Prohibit a publicly owned treatment works from diverting flows to bypass any portion of its treatment facility.

Rockies Prosperity Act – H.R. 1204 - Designate certain public lands as wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and national park and preserve study areas in the States of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

During the first months of the 109th, I have taken other actions to ensure that the government is adequately funding projects to protect the environment protection and to ensure that the Environmental Protection Agency continues to fulfill its mission. Below is the list.

- A letter to the EPA to express concerns about a new policy that would allow sewage treatment plants to discharge inadequately treated sewage into waterways.
- In support of increased funding for the FY2006 state and tribal Wildlife Grants programs – the nation's core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered in every state.
- In support of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, which contributes to the survival of animals and birds in the wild.
- In support of increased funding for the cleanup of Superfund sites.
- In support of increased funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act – protects wetland habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

On Earth Day, we must rededicate ourselves to protecting the health of our children by striving for the preservation of what was given to us at the creation of this planet. Together we can leave our planet a little greener and a little more peaceful if we work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congressman John Lewis  
Georgia's 5th Congressional District

